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CD 655 Ministering with Children Through the Church

Catherine Stonehouse

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PRE SEMESTER DRAFT

Catherine Stonehouse, Ph.D.
Professor of Christian Education
Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY 40390

Syllabus
Spring 2006
Three Hours

CD 655 - Ministering with Children through the Church

Examines the potential and needs of children in contemporary society, biblical perspectives on children and how they are to be involved in the faith community, and characteristics of the child's physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, and faith development. Explores the ministries a church can provide to involve children in the faith community, meeting their needs, nurturing wholeness and faith.

Course Objectives

Having completed this course with competence, the student will:

1. Have a basic understanding of the physical, psychosocial, cognitive, moral, and spiritual development, the potential and needs of children from birth to age 12.
2. Identify processes and commitments characteristic of ministries designed to involve children in a faith community and nurture them toward wholeness and a maturing faith.
3. Be able to articulate his/her theology of children's ministries based on Scripture, an understanding of child development, and spiritual formation.
4. Have grown in ability to:
 - a. Involve children in meaningful worship and learning.
 - b. Support families in the nurture of children.
 - c. Support children in times of crisis such as illness, divorce, grief, or abuse.
 - d. Nurture special children such as the gifted and those with handicaps.
 - e. Identify the support and equipping needs of lay volunteers ministering with children in the church.

Assignments

Reading

Children Matter: Celebrating their Place in the Church, Family, and Community,

Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell

Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith, Catherine Stonehouse

Real Kids Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives, Karen Marie Yust

Offering the Gospel to Children, Gretchen Wolff Pritchard

Children in Crisis: A New Commitment, Phyllis Kilbourn, ed.

Additional reading for research paper

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Processing Reading: Come to class each week ready to articulate at least two significant insights from the reading and two ministry implication questions related to the insights. These will be used in class sharing and discussions.

The course Schedule indicates the material to be read prior to each class session, and the dates when Reading Cards are due.

**On the date when all reading is to be completed for a given text,
submit a Reading Card stating that you have completed the reading in that text.**

Projects

1. Mapping the Journey: (20 points)

Based on the readings assigned through February 28, prepare a comprehensive chart that lays out the characteristics of a child's psychosocial, cognitive, moral, and spiritual development during the various segments of the journey through childhood: infancy, preschool, early elementary, and pre-adolescence. Gather the information for the chart as you do the reading and document sources.

After laying out the characteristics, identify ministry implications that flow from those developmental processes and include those in columns for "Family Implications" and "Ministry Implications." Note the sample template at the end of the syllabus.

Grading Criteria:

1. Comprehensiveness of developmental descriptions
2. Comprehensiveness and Insightfulness of ministry implications

Due: Part I – February 21 – bring to class for discussion

Part II – February 28 – bring to class for discussion

Full Chart – March 7 – Hand in completed chart

2. Spiritual Journey Reflections: (5 points)

Particularly in the early part of the semester, reflect on your spiritual journey, looking more deeply at your childhood and how that part of the journey has influenced the rest. Where do you see God at work forming you? What relationships and experiences, both positive and negative, do you see as formative?

The seminary's Christian Formation Plan identified six Formative Values. The first three are:

Personal and Social Holiness

Personal purity based within adoration of the Father and social engagement based on the servanthood of the Son and engendered by the Holy Spirit.

Crucial Moments and Continual Processes

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Specific and unique momentary submissions of the believer to God and processes mapped against human spiritual, psychological, social, and cultural development.

Justice and Mercy

Social engagement fueled by mercy for fallible humanity and the quest for justice in personal, communal, political, and international contexts.

Reflect on these formative values—written for seminarians, not children, I realize. Do you recall from your childhood any practices, influences, or teaching, that might have been the beginning of your formation in any of these areas?

Prepare a 3-5-page report of your reflections on your spiritual journey during childhood that includes the following.

- a. The story, in outline form, of your spiritual journey from birth to 12 or 14 years of age and how that part of your journey has impacted you later in life.
- b. Reflection on the presence or absence, during your childhood, of influences relating to the Christian Formation Plan's Formative Values listed above.
- c. Reflect briefly on how your experience compares to the child development understandings from course readings.

I will be looking for:

1. Quality of reflection
2. Insightfulness regarding the relationship between childhood and ongoing journey

Due: March 14

3. Theology of Ministry with Children Paper (20 points)

Write an 8-10 page paper articulating your theology of ministry with children. Based on biblical perspectives on children and your understanding of how God has created them to grow, learn, and be formed, what do you believe about the child's relationship with God and what the faith community should be providing for the nurture of children?

Write your paper as a means of presenting your theology of ministry with children to a congregation that is exploring the possibility of hiring you as their children's pastor. Be sure to provide biblical and theological support for your beliefs and document the support for your beliefs

Grading Criteria

- Breadth of the theological beliefs discussed
- Biblical/theological support for beliefs
- Integration of course related material
- Clarity of presentation

Due: March 28

4. Children's Ministry Observation and Report (20 points)

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Locate a church that has a strong ministry with children and their families. Observe those ministries and talk with a leader in the church about their ministry and the principles behind it. Invest 6-8 hours observing ministries and talking with and possibly shadowing the leader.

Write a 5-8 page paper describing what you learned about the ministry. Identify, in outline form, the ministries the church offers for children and their families. Describe the models and methods used for teaching/learning and worship. What place do the children have in the faith community? How are relationships built between children, their peers, and other generations? What leadership structures are in place? Discuss how the concepts presented in this course are implemented in the ministries you observed, ways in which the ministry might be strengthened by more fully applying course principles, and other insights you gained that have not been discussed in class.

Grading Criteria

1. Depth of understanding of the church's ministries
2. Insightfulness of assessment in the light of course content

Due: April 18

5. Research Paper/Presentation: (20 points)

Select a topic relating to ministry with children, research it, write up the findings in a 5-8 page paper, and prepare a 20-30 minute presentation for passing your learning on to the volunteer staff or parents that you might be leading as a children's pastor. Hand in the outline of the presentation along with the paper.

During the last class session you will share your presentation with 3 or 4 of your classmates.

Grading Criteria

1. Significance of findings from research
2. The clarity and creativity of the presentation

Due: May 16

All papers are to be typed and double-spaced.

Sources are to be documented using some approved form.

Inclusive language is to be used when speaking of human beings.

Course Schedule

Dates	Topics	Reading	Items Due
February 7	Getting Started		
February 14	Children in the Bible	Stonehouse Ch. 1-2 May et al Ch. 1, 2, 5	

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February 21	Understanding Child Development	Stonehouse Ch. 3-5 May et al Ch. 4	Mapping the Journey - I
February 28	Knowing God in Childhood	Stonehouse Ch. 6-7 May et al Ch.3, 7	Mapping the Journey - II
March 7	Communicating Theological Concepts to Children	Stonehouse Ch. 8-9 Pritchard Ch. 1-5 May et al Ch. 11	Mapping the Journey - Complete <u>Reading Card:</u> Stonehouse
March 14	Story in the Child's Faith Development	Pritchard Ch. 6-10 May et al Ch. 9	Spiritual Journey Reflections
March 21	Effective Teaching Learning Ministries	May et al Ch. 10, 12 Pritchard Ch. 19-24	
March 28	Ministries with Families	May Ch. 8 Yust	Theology: Ministry with Children <u>Reading Card</u>
April 3-7	Reading Week		
April 11	Generations Learning and Growing Together Schooling Options	May et al Ch. 13 Pritchard Ch. 11-18	<u>Reading Card:</u> Pritchard
April 18	Welcoming Special Children Walking with Gifted Children	May et al Ch. 14	Observation/Report
April 25	Pastoral Care of Children Preparing for Adolescence		
May 2	Children and Abuse Ministry with at Risk Children	Kilbourn	<u>Reading Card:</u> Kilbourn
May 9	Leading Ministry with Children	May et al Ch. 15	<u>Reading Card:</u> May et al
May 16	Presentations and Wrap Up		Research Paper/Presentation

Grading

Potential Points	Course Grade Scale
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Mapping the Journey	20				
Spiritual Journey	5				
Theology of Ministry		95-100	A	80-82.4	B-
with children	20	90-94.9	A-	77.5-79.9	C+
Observation Report	20	85-89.9	B+	75-77.4	C
Paper/Presentation	20	82.5-84.9	B	72.5-74.9	C-
Reading	<u>15</u>				
Total	100				

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As you are doing your course readings, be identifying the descriptions for each of the areas of the child's development.

Also note how parents and adults ministering with children in the church should respond to children to work with the realities of development and enhance their healthy development.

Prepare charts for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, early elementary, and preadolescents or later elementary children. Landscape layout is probably best.

Descriptions	Implications for Families	Implications for Ministry in the Church
Psychosocial List in outline the characteristics psychosocial development at the various periods of childhood. Provide enough description for the reader to see what contributes to the positive resolution of life crises.		
Cognitive In outline form, describe the characteristics of the child's thinking. Include insights from readings and notes on Piaget and Vygotski		
Moral In the reading, most of the insights on moral development come from Kohlberg's research.		
Spiritual Include insights from the research of Fowler, Ruzutto, Cavalletti, Berryman, and possibly others.		